

Drinking Water Information

For drinking water system owners and operators of small systems serving the public

This fact sheet may apply to drinking water systems serving public facilities such as small motels, bed and breakfasts, marinas, recreational facilities, fishing camps, small resorts and facilities like road-side garages or rural stores that have washrooms for the public.

As an owner/operator of a stand-alone drinking water system that serves a small non-municipal non-residential public facility, there are a number of requirements you must meet in order to comply with Ontario's *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* (O. Reg. 170/03).

However, many facilities may be able to post signs which exempt you from all testing and treatment requirements of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation*.

The information in this fact sheet will help you determine if your system is required to sample, test and treat your water according to the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation*. If these requirements apply to you, this fact sheet will summarize the steps you must take to meet your responsibilities under the regulation.

Definition of a small non-municipal non-residential system is as follows:

- A drinking water system that is not owned by a municipality
- A system that is not capable of supplying drinking water at a rate more than 2.9 litres per second
- A system that serves a designated facility or public facility and
- Does not serve:
 - A major residential development, or
 - A trailer park or campground that has more than 5 sites with water hook-up

Small systems serving the public that are connected to municipal systems:

- If you are connected to, and your water comes directly from, a municipal system, and all the piping in your small system serving the public is plumbing under the building code, then the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* **does not apply to your system, and nothing is required of you.** Municipal drinking water systems must meet stringent requirements under the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* (O.Reg.170/03) to ensure that the water supplied to the homes and other buildings connected to the system is safe.

Sign posting option for small systems serving the public:

Many small non-municipal, non-residential systems will have the option to post signs, providing they meet the following conditions. Posting signs, where allowed, will exempt the drinking water system from the other requirements of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation*, including all testing and treatment options. However, some drinking water systems will have a time limit on using this option. For these systems, posting will only be possible until July 1, 2008 for surface water sources or December 31, 2009 for groundwater sources. Refer to subsection 8(4) of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* to find out if these end dates for the posting option apply to your system.

Important note about posting signs

You have the option to post signs by June 1, 2005 at your public facility as long as you meet all of the following conditions:

- Your system does not serve a food service establishment. **You should consult with your local public health unit to find out whether or not you are serving a food service establishment.**



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- You do not serve a designated facility such as a children's camp, school or day care. Owners and operators of drinking water systems serving designated facilities were required to begin testing June 1, 2003. Owners and operators of designated facilities, except for seniors' homes not operated for commercial purposes and all children's camps, have been responsible for treating their water since July 1, 2003. Seniors' residences not operated for commercial purposes and all children's camps were required to comply with the treatment requirements of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* as of July 1, 2004.
- Your system is not capable of supplying water at a rate greater than 2.9 litres per second. It is unlikely that a small public facility would have this capability. Please check the specifications on your pump or call your pump manufacturer.
- You post signs on all taps warning that the water has not been tested or treated for drinking water purposes.
- Disconnect all drinking water fountains.
- Use signs provided by, or approved by, the ministry. They are available free of charge by calling 1-800-565-4923.
- Check the signs at least once a week to ensure they are in place and are legible.
- Keep records of the date and time, and the name of the person who performs each check and keep these records for at least five years.
- Notify the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) when you begin posting signs by completing a *Notice of Intent to Post (Warning) Notices* available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm

Small non-municipal non-residential systems that must meet the testing and treatment requirements

If your facility:

- **Has a food service establishment served by your drinking water system or**
 - **Chooses not to post signs**
- you should follow the steps summarized on pages 3 and 4. You should also refer to a more detailed kit that is available at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4427e.pdf or by calling 1-800-565-4923.

Systems in this category must start sampling and testing water by **June 1, 2005**. In addition, systems in this category must install treatment equipment by **July 1, 2005** for surface water sources, and **December 31, 2006** for groundwater sources. The actions you must take to meet your responsibilities under the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* are summarized on pages 3 and 4.

If your small system serves a designated facility, owners and operators of drinking water systems serving these facilities were required to begin testing June 1, 2003. Owners and operators of designated facilities, except for seniors' residences not operated for commercial purposes and all children's camps have been responsible for treating their water since July 1, 2003. Seniors' residences not operated for commercial purposes and all children's camps were required to comply with the treatment requirements of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* by July 1, 2004.

Maintaining your well

If your source of water is groundwater, you must also properly maintain your well to protect the groundwater supply.

Well owners are responsible for any wells on their property, so it is important that you understand the rules and what you can do to make sure your well is properly constructed and maintained. *Ontario's Wells Regulation* (O. Reg. 903 under the *Ontario Water Resources Act*) as amended in August 2003, sets out new standards for well construction, location and abandonment that must be followed by well owners and the contractors they hire to construct, repair or seal a well.

To learn more about these standards, please refer to the ministry's website www.ene.gov.on.ca for fact sheets on:

- water well construction
- the protection of water quality in drilled wells
- the protection of water quality in bored or dug wells
- the protection of water quality in jetted and driven point wells

However, to be certain your well is in compliance, you should review *Ontario's Wells Regulation*. This can be viewed on the Ministry of the Environment website at www.ene.gov.on.ca. You can obtain a print copy by calling the ministry's Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923. You may also want to consider hiring a licensed well contractor to conduct an inspection.

Please remember that this fact sheet is provided for guidance only. For a complete understanding of your responsibilities as a drinking water system owner you must refer directly to the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation*.

For the most up-to-date fact sheets, a kit explaining your responsibilities in more detail and for copies of the regulation, check the Ministry of the Environment's website at www.ene.gov.on.ca or call the Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923.

Steps for Compliance with O. Reg. 170/03 Requirements for a small non-municipal system serving the public

Step 1: Register your drinking water system before June 1, 2005

- To register your system, go to the Drinking Water Information System (DWIS) at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm and follow the online instructions.
- Once you have registered, you will be sent an email with your drinking water system number, category, user name and password, usually within one to two business days.
- While the Ministry of the Environment requires electronic submissions of information, you may be authorized to make paper submissions under special circumstances. Please call 1-866-793-2588 for more information about paper submissions.

Step 2: Select a licensed laboratory to analyze your drinking water samples

- Provide the Ministry of the Environment with information about the licensed laboratory you will use to analyze your drinking water samples by filling out a *Laboratory Services Notification*, which is available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm
- A list of laboratories that are licensed by the Ministry of the Environment to carry out drinking water testing services is available at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/licensedlabs.htm

Step 3: Sampling and testing requirements

- It is your responsibility to know and meet the sampling and testing requirements applicable to your system.

Starting on June 1, 2005:

Microbiological sampling and testing requirements:

- Raw water samples must be collected at **least once a month**
- Distribution samples (e.g. taken from taps) must be collected:
 - if not chlorinating or chloraminating, at **least once a week**
 - if chlorinating or chloraminating, **once every 2 weeks**
- A series of acceptable results over 24 consecutive months may allow you to reduce the frequency of sampling.

Chemical sampling and testing requirements vary depending on the parameter.

Review Schedule 15 of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* for the requirements. The regulation is available at:

www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/legislation.htm or by calling 1-800-565-4923.

- All organic and inorganic parameters listed in Schedules 23 and 24 of O. Reg. 170/03: **At least once every 5 years (only if serving a designated facility)**
- Nitrate & Nitrite: **At least once every 3 months**
- Sodium and Fluoride: **At least once every 5 years**
- Lead: **At least once every 5 years**

- The way you collect water samples affects the accuracy of your test results. It is critical that water samples are collected as specified by the laboratory. For more information on collecting samples, refer to *A Kit for Regulated Non-Municipal Drinking-Water System Owners*. You can access the kit online at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4427e.pdf or you can order a print copy by calling 1-800-565-4923.

Step 4: Have a “trained person” adjust equipment and conduct operational checks

- Ensure a “trained person” performs all necessary adjustments to the water treatment equipment and conducts any required operational checks (e.g. chlorine or turbidity tests).
- The “trained person” designation is obtained through completion of a Director-approved course every three years. More information is available at www.oetc.on.ca

Step 5: Have an engineering evaluation report completed and submit written notice to the Ministry of the Environment

- Hire a professional engineer with experience in sanitary engineering to prepare your engineering evaluation report on the installation of treatment equipment.
- Names of some service providers are available at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4222e_appendix.htm

- **The report is due 30 days after the following treatment deadlines:**
 - **July 1, 2005 for surface water systems**
 - **December 31, 2006 for groundwater systems**
- Submit written notice to the Ministry of the Environment within 7 days of receiving the report using an *Engineering Evaluation Report* available on DWIS at:
www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm
- Do not submit the report to the Ministry of the Environment. Keep it on file and make it available upon request.

Know Your Minimum Treatment Requirements

- Primary Disinfection for groundwater sources.
- Filtration and Primary Disinfection for surface water sources.

TIP! Ultraviolet (UV) units are commonly used to treat water for small systems with groundwater sources. These units have an average starting cost of approximately \$2,000 including alarms.

Step 6: Applying for full relief from requiring any treatment

- You can only apply for full relief from treatment requirements if your drinking water system relies on a groundwater source. Your engineering report should include this information.
- Consult with users of the system and summarize comments and responses.
- Submit the summary and provide written notice to the Ministry of the Environment using the application in the *Guide for Applying for Approvals Related to Municipal and Non-Municipal Drinking-Water Systems* available at:
www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4467e.pdf

Step 7: Notify authorities of adverse test results and/or other problems

- As soon as you become aware of an adverse test result, or if you observe that your drinking water system is not properly disinfecting water that is being directed to users, immediately contact your local Medical Officer of Health AND the Ministry of the Environment Spills Action Centre (SAC) at 1-800-268-6060.
- Submit written notice to both of the above authorities within 24 hours using the *Written Notification of Adverse Water Quality Incident* available on DWIS at:
www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm

- Submit written notice to the ministry and the local Medical Officer of Health of action taken and results achieved within 7 days after the issue is resolved using the *Written Notification of Adverse Water Quality Incident* available on DWIS at:
www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm

Step 8: Take corrective action

- Refer to Schedule 18 of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* for actions you must take following adverse test results or other problems.
- Where required, post warning notices in prominent locations where it is likely to be seen by those using water from the system.
- Obtain Ministry of the Environment-approved warning notices by calling 1-800-565-4923.

Step 9: Submit an annual report

- The *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* requires that all regulated drinking water systems submit an annual report.
- The first Annual Report is due to the Ministry of the Environment by May 31, 2006 and covers the reporting period from June 2005 through to March 2006.
- Submit the report to the Ministry of the Environment using the *Annual Report* available on DWIS at:
www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm

Step 10: Make information available to the public

- Keep copies of the following reports on site, and make them available on request, free of charge, during normal business hours:
 - Annual reports for the last two years
 - Engineering Evaluation Reports for the last two years
 - All test results, approvals and orders issued for the last two years
 - A copy of the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* (O. Reg. 170/03)

If you would like more information, please contact the Ministry of the Environment's Public Information Centre at: 1-800-565-4923.

You may access all the documents including the *Drinking-Water Systems Regulation* (O. Reg. 170/03) and all DWIS notices and reports at
www.ene.gov.on.ca